

REMARKS

Claims 6-9, 11, 17 and 2-23 are pending in the present application. Claims 8, 9 and 11 have been amended. New claims 21-23 have been added. The specification has been amended to correct a typographical error. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication in the April 12, 2006 Advisory Action that claim 7 is allowable.

Applicants note that, in response to the April 12, 2006 Advisory Action, claims 8, 9 and 11 have been further amended to clarify that the slot of the cannulated shaft of the driver extends "through two opposed regions of a wall of the enclosed cannulated shaft." Applicants submit that none of the prior art references cited in the December 29, 2005 Office Action discloses, teaches or suggests the limitations of claims 8, 9 and 11.

Applicants further submit that the cited prior art references, considered alone or in combination, do not disclose, teach or suggest all limitations of claim 6. Green et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,643,319) does not disclose the step of "loading a suture strand through a flexible eyelet extending from a proximal end of an insert molded ribbed, non-threaded suture anchor, the flexible eyelet comprising a loop of suture, a portion of which has been insert molded into the suture anchor," as recited in independent claim 6. Green et al. also does not disclose the step of "advancing, without turning, the insert molded ribbed, non-threaded suture anchor into the hole," as claim 6 recites.

Neither Thal (U.S. Patent No. 5,569,306) nor Anspach (U.S. Patent No. 5,102,421) discloses the step of "loading a suture strand through a flexible eyelet extending from a proximal end of an insert molded ribbed, non-threaded suture anchor, the flexible eyelet comprising a loop of suture, a portion of which has been insert molded into the suture anchor," much less the step of "securing tissue to the

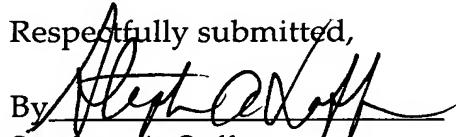
insert molded ribbed suture anchor by passing the suture strand through the tissue and tying a knot with suture strand to secure the tissue," as claim 6 recites.

Grafton et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,964,783) does not rectify the deficiencies of the cited prior art references. Grafton et al. is silent about "loading a suture strand through a flexible eyelet extending from a proximal end of an insert molded ribbed, non-threaded suture anchor, the flexible eyelet comprising a loop of suture, a portion of which has been insert molded into the suture anchor," or about "advancing, without turning, the insert molded ribbed, non-threaded suture anchor into the hole," as claim 6 recites.

New claims 21-23 have been added to recite that the proximal end of the suture anchor of the claimed invention is "tapered." None of the prior art references cited in the December 29, 2005 Office Action discloses, teaches or suggests this claim limitation.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention as set forth in the amended claims is distinguishable over the cited references. Allowance of all pending claims is solicited.

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